

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 18-26 and 28-34 are pending in the present application. Claims 18, 26, and 28 are amended and Claim 27 is canceled by the present amendment.

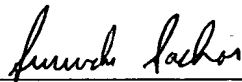
In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 18-21, 23-25, and 33-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Maurice (WO 91/10234) in view of Kumio (Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 02-050309); Claims 22 and 29-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Maurice in view of Kumio and Strand (U.S. Patent No. 4,660,175); and Claims 26-28 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. In view of this indication, independent Claim 18 is amended to include the features of allowable Claim 27, and therefore Claim 27 is canceled. In addition, Claim 26, which was indicated as including allowable subject matter, is rewritten in independent form without adding new matter as suggested in the outstanding Office Action. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 18 and 26 and each of the claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish over the applied art.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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